

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of claims:

1. ~~(presently amended)~~ ^{currently}: An improved applanation lens for use in an interface between a patient's eye and a surgical laser system, said improved applanation lens comprising:

a lens having an applanation surface configured to contact the eye, said lens being formed of high purity synthetic fused silicon dioxide (SiO_2) such that said lens does not discolor or lose light transmittance when subjected to gamma radiation.
2. (original): The improved applanation lens of claim 1, wherein said applanation lens has a transmittance of greater than 90% for wavelengths of light from 275nm - 2500nm.
3. (original): The improved applanation lens of claim 2, wherein said applanation lens has a transmittance of greater than 90% for a wavelength of about 1053nm.
4. (original): The improved applanation lens of claim 1, wherein said applanation lens has an index of refraction of approximately 1.46.
5. (previously presented): The improved applanation lens of claim 1, wherein said applanation lens is formed of an SiO_2 with a purity great enough to resist discoloration upon prolonged irradiation by high energy radiation such as gamma rays or neutrons.
6. ~~(presently amended)~~ ^{currently}: The improved applanation lens of claim 5, wherein said high purity SiO_2 [comprises a fused silica] is noncrystalline.
7. ~~(presently amended)~~ ^{currently}: An interface, adapted to couple a patient's eye to a surgical laser, the interface comprising:
 - a. an attachment apparatus adapted to overlay the anterior surface of an eye and for stable engagement to the eye;
 - b. an applanation lens adapted to be mounted on the attachment apparatus, said applanation lens having an applanation surface configured to contact the eye, said surface

being bounded by a plane and coupled to a delivery tip of the surgical laser such that the delivery tip is referenced to the plane; and

c. said applanation lens being formed of high purity synthetic fused SiO₂, such that said applanation lens does not discolor or lose light transmittance when subjected to gamma radiation.

8. (original): The interface of claim 7, wherein said applanation lens has a transmittance of greater than 90% for wavelengths of light from 275nm - 2500nm.

9. (original): The interface of claim 8, wherein said applanation lens has a transmittance of greater than 90% for a wavelength of about 1053nm.

10. (original): The interface of claim 7, wherein said applanation lens has an index of refraction of approximately 1.46.

11. (previously presented): The interface of claim 7, wherein said applanation lens is formed of an SiO₂ with a purity great enough to resist discoloration upon prolonged irradiation by high energy radiation such as gamma rays or neutrons.

12. (~~presently~~ ^{currently} amended): The interface of claim 7, wherein said high purity SiO₂ [comprises a fused silica] is noncrystalline.

13. (~~presently~~ ^{currently} amended): A method for applanating an anterior surface of a patient's eye and coupling the eye to a surgical laser, the method comprising the steps of:

a. providing an interface that has been sterilized with gamma radiation, the interface including a central orifice, and an applanation lens having top and bottom surfaces;

b. removably coupling a suction ring to the bottom surface of the interface; positioning the interface over an operative area of an eye, such that the suction ring comes into proximate contact with the surface of the eye;

c. applying a suction to the suction ring to thereby stabilize the position of the interface relative to the operative area of the eye;

d. positioning [an] the applanation lens in proximate contact with the operative area of the eye, said applanation lens having an applanation surface configured to contact the eye

said applanation lens being formed of high purity synthetic fused SiO₂, such that said applanation lens does not discolor or lose light transmittance when subjected to gamma radiation; and

e. coupling the applanation lens to the interface to thereby stabilize the position of the lens relative to the operative area of the eye.

14. (original): The method of claim 13, wherein said applanation lens has a transmittance of greater than 90% for wavelengths of light from 275nm - 2500nm.

c) cont.
15. (original): The method of claim 14, wherein said applanation lens has a transmittance of greater than 90% for a wavelength of about 1053nm.

16. (original): The method of claim 13, wherein said applanation lens has an index of refraction of approximately 1.46.

17. (previously presented): The method of claim 13, wherein said applanation lens is formed of an SiO₂ with a purity great enough to resist discoloration upon prolonged irradiation by high energy radiation such as gamma rays or neutrons.

18. ^{currently} (presently amended): The method of claim 13, wherein said high purity SiO₂ [comprises a fused silica] is noncrystalline.